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America's Christmas of Peril

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WILLIAMS SANK SPEECHLESS INTO A CHAIR.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS morning of 1776, beaming bright and frosty on sparkling snow and glistening icicles all over the northern American colonies, might seem to mock with its splendor the patriots' trust in God's approval of their cause, for never did glorious winter day so strikingly suggest a smiling heaven, and never looked heaven on a patriot cause in such sore need as that championed by General Washington and his men.

The principal theater of the war had shifted to the banks of the Delaware. On Dec 8 Washington, hotly pursued by Cornwallis and Knyphausen, had crossed that river in boats. He had barely 3,000 men. Cornwallis and his Hessians and British and colonial

loyalists, having no boats, for Washington had seized all in sight, were obliged to remain on the New Jersey side until the river should be sufficiently frozen to allow them to cross on the ice. Congress, doubting that Washington could save Philadelphia when that should be done, had fled from that city to Baltimore. But the great commander had not lost heart. He calmly awaited the coming of General Lee with 3,000 more men from Morristown, firmly trusting that they would arrive at the river and outwit the enemy in effecting a crossing before the ice should get strong enough to hold up large bodies of marching troops. He had his boats ready for their transportation.

On that bright and frosty Christmas

morning a stout built, blue eyed and rosy cheeked young man of about twenty-five and of middle height, in the uniform of a British colonel, walked briskly down the main street of the village of Trenton, whose few taverns and their vicinity were crowded with Hessian troops, just arrived. Near the Church of England house of worship at the end of the street stood the comfortable two story cottage of the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, where also dwelt the boasted beauty of the New Jersey colony, his lovely daughter Ann, whose tall and graceful form, dark eyes and hair of gold were toasted often and again even in faroff England, to which land her father often took her when visiting his old friends of Oxford, where he got his doctor de-

gree. The young officer entered the pastor's door.

Soon there sounded a light step in the hall, and sweet Ann Wilson, lovelier than ever, burst upon his vision.

"Thank God for your safety first and next for your renown, report of which has reached us and the revival of which I proudly see!" she said.

And now shuffled in the bent and gray old doctor, carrying blessing, welcome and congratulation on his withered, outstretched hands.

"Made a captain at Long Island and a colonel at Harlem Heights!" cried the old man, weeping with pure delight. "Thrice welcome, and God bless you!"

"And behold," cried the young man exultingly, turning to him, "I bring you tidings of greater joy!" He reluctantly released the hands of fair Ann for those of her parent. "I am selected," turning to her again, "for the glorious trust of effecting the capture of the arch traitor."

"George Washington!" exclaimed both his listeners.

"Yes, this very Christmas night! I know that I am as safe in telling that here as I was in suggesting the plan to General Cornwallis himself."

He walked to the mantel and took up a withered rose branch.

"You have cherished this," he said tenderly, advancing to her with it. "May I hope that its condition is not a sign of withered regard?" He smiled confidently.

"Indeed, dear Edward, were it to symbolize my continued friendship for you fitly it should blossom now out of its barrenness even as did the rod of Aaron." Her eyes shone with repressed tears.

"Friendship!" he repeatedly testily, plucking moodily at the withered leaves and throwing them on the floor. "I had your friendship, Ann. Was it merely to maintain it that I dined with death a hundred times since this gay branch was in full flower that I might shine before you as a hero more worthy of your love than one whose daring exploits were winning infamy?"

"Edward, no, not infamy," spiritedly interrupted Ann, her fine eyes flashing. "Censure his judgment if you will, but be just for the sake of the days when we three were friends."

"Hear me out, Ann," he said hotly, planting himself in her way. "I repeat the declaration I made when I last saw you. No"—she was about to speak—"before you answer now hear me out." He took her arm and led her to the window again.

"See those Hessians in the street," he went on. "Well, their presence is part of my plan. They are marching in here in plain view of Washington himself, whose headquarters you see across there where the flag is flying. They are only 2,000 strong, and no more will come. The rebels have been joined by about 2,500 of their kind

from Morristown under a General Sullivan. We caught 500 more last night and General Lee himself. These included a company that was to have spied on our strength and gone over the river in advance of the rest to tell Washington the situation. Read this letter."

The letter he showed simply read:

To Whom It May Concern: The bearer may be absolutely trusted. LEE.

"The bearer of that," he proceeded,

"was a Captain John Stafford, now safe in our custody down in Bordentown. But tonight I will be that trusty captain and induce the arch rebel to cross at a certain point with just enough of men to join Lee on this side and take Trenton from the 2,000 Hessians he is now counting. He will fall into the trap and be one of the first men ashore. The rest will be simple. I will myself seize him. A knighthood and the governorship of a colony will be two of my rewards. The third, if you consent— But you seem preoccupied, dear." He took her hand again.

"Is—is he—among your prisoners?" she asked in a trembling voice.

"Warren Stryker? No, and truly for your sake and the memory of the school days of us three in New York I am glad that he is not. I bear him no malice, though he took the rebel side and for a time at least had stolen your affections."

"Edward, I love him now and will be true to him while you holly is evergreen," replied the fair girl, flushing rosy red and drawing herself up to her full height. A holly bush outside the window had suggested her last words. "He is a rebel soldier, as you are a brave loyalist. For the success of our side I pray daily, hourly pray, and for his safety."

"When did you see him last, may I ask?" he inquired coolly.

"Three weeks ago," she moaned.

"What, here?" he blurted out in alarm.

"Yes," she sighed, still swaying from side to side in her wretchedness, "when his regiment crossed the river."

"Then he's in the camp over yonder?"

"I suppose so."

"Great heavens! Our information was that Captain Stryker, Washington's most useful scout and spy, came in from Morristown with Lee and was one of the few who escaped last night, but who must soon be taken, as they cannot cross the river owing to the strict watch of our horsemen. Whew, here's a pleasant prospect for me now, the chance of meeting him in yonder camp! 'Tis well indeed that I go at night and that the headquarters are so near the river. When the war ends in rebel defeat his days will be numbered."

"Oh, Edward, 'will you save him?' She stood white and shaking before him, her hands clasped in supplication.

"The captor of George Washington would surely be granted the pardon of a rebel captiv'n."

"You will, then?"

He caught both her hands passionately.

"If you marry me," he answered, with slow, grim decisiveness.

She wrenched her hands free, burst into tears and swept from the room.

CHAPTER II.

HE rushed from the house, hot with rage and shame. He felt that he should have waited until Stryker was a prisoner. He had made a false move, and now even her esteem was lost to him.

A party of four Hessian officers, half drunk and noisy, were coming up the street. Among them was one, the soberest of the lot, a burly, brawny, curly bearded man of forty, who wore

the mercenaries' insignia of the rank of a colonel. "Probably Rahl," thought our colonel. He was right. Colonel Rahl made no guess as to who the other was. He did not care, but he had the courtesy to salute an officer outranking him, for colonials as well as regulars of the British did outrank the hired foreigners.

The courtesy was in the act of being returned when Rahl exclaimed, looking straight ahead:

"Mein Gott, dere was mein schatz! Schtop! Hey, mein beauty!"

As he raised his voice to carry these last words to some person ahead whom he was addressing Colonel Williams turned around and saw Ann Wilson, who had just left her home to attend church, running in fright to the door of the sacred edifice. The Hessians broke into a roar of laughter, and their leader swore in his broken English that he had noted the house she had come out of and would make it his headquarters during his stay in Trenton.

In an instant the enraged colonial was at the side of Rahl.

White with anger, he managed to say, with some show of calmness: "Pardon me, colonel, but I am here by special order of Lord Cornwallis. That house belongs to friends of mine, and I have made it my headquarters during our stay in Trenton."

"Colonel," responded the now angry foreigner (we will forego his mangled English), "I am in this service for pay, and, as I may suppose you know, that service ends in a few days, so I do not care a button now what I do."

"You shall not intrude in that house, I tell you!"

"We shall see!"

They had been walking together in the direction of the church, and now they arrived opposite its door. The Hessians sauntered along laughing. Williams, without another word, turned into the church just as the venerable clergyman was beginning his discourse. Ann Wilson was in her accustomed pew, near the pulpit.

Crack, crack, crack!

The sound of musket firing close by was the sudden and startling rejoinder which interrupted the reverend man. His congregation arose in panic and rushed out of the church door.

A fine and fiery roan steed came up the highway like a tornado. On his neck was a tall figure in homespun.

"My horse!" ejaculated Colonel Williams, and, rushing a few yards up the road, stood ready to seize the bridle.

The horseman faced to the front. For a moment the carbine was at his shoulder; then it was lowered, and while a woman's scream arose from the church door the clattering hoofs dashed by.

Red coated dragoons emerged at a gallop from a lane into the road before him and formed across it to bar his way, while at full speed rode in from the other direction a larger party, in the same uniforms, probably the men who had fired on him. Colonel Williams advanced on foot, calling out to the pursued one to surrender.

"The river! The river!" shrieked Ann Wilson, and for an instant every brain but one thought of a rebel attack, and every eye was turned to the sunlit Delaware and its floating icy isles. It was but twenty yards away. A little churchyard stretched down to its banks, from where the lone horseman waited and watched, finger on trigger, for the best chance to make one opening in the red ranks through which he might make another dash to freedom.

But suddenly he was over the churchyard wall, and from the high river bank he and his horse plunged into the icy flood below.

Half a dozen dragoons with whom

the Hessian officers now mingled dismounted and clambered over the wall. They saw the noble steed struggling helplessly in a whirling ice filled eddy that touched the shore.

"Don't shoot!" cried Colonel Williams, running after the party. "The horse and man must be swept ashore there!" The soldiers were taking aim.

The redcoats lowered their carbines, for they were Captain Hardy's company of Williams' own command, but Colonel Rahl, who, with his merry friends, had gained the bank, took a pistol out of his pocket and fired at the daring rider, now within a dozen yards and coming inshore. Horse and rider sank, and when they next appeared the man was out of the stirrups, the horse was bleeding and dying, and both were close to the bank. With the assistance of bridle reins thrown to him the fugitive climbed out and up the icy bank, still holding his trusty carbine, now, alas, useless.

"Surrender to me, you dog of a rebel!" shouted Rahl. The prisoner looked at him with a glance of contempt. "Take this man to the first house, there, the parsonage!" cried Colonel Williams, and the dragoons proceeded to obey. The Hessians glared impotently.

"Very well," cried Rahl, with a forced laugh, "that will do; that's my headquarters. Captain Hermann, you and Steyn and Brandt go and bring up your companies. We will soon see who is in command here!"

Ann Wilson, her face white as that of the aged man on whose arm she leaned, had eyes for no one or nothing but the oncoming, dripping prisoner.

They looked sadly into each other's eyes, but made no sign of recognition as his captors halted him at the door.

Colonel Williams, coming up, asked the preacher to admit the half drowned man and to provide him with change of clothing at once. "He is my prisoner," he added, with a glance at woe stricken Ann. Was it a look of triumph or of assurance? Alas, she could not tell.

"And look you, old one, that he does not escape, else I'll hang you for it. I'm in command in Trenton, and this house is my headquarters. I will be ready for dinner in an hour, and so will three of my captains. You hear?" So spoke Rahl and sauntered off to await the coming of his reinforcements, muttering to himself, "And the beauty shall be one of the party." Ann and her father followed Williams and the prisoner into the house, and the dragoons surrounded it.

CHAPTER III.

THE prisoner wheeled about and with a smile held out a hand to woe and tottering Ann.

"Fear not for me, dear," he said. "Christmas tells us there is a Saviour."

She placed her hand in his, shuddered and looked appealingly at Williams. No word did she speak, but her father, to whom Stryker offered his disengaged hand, sobbed as his quivering voice uttered the words:

"Oh, Warren Stryker, you utter blasphemy! Son of my neighbor, may God forgive you for your treason and for the woe you have brought to us!"

The young man's smile died away. He turned from father and daughter to Williams, who sullenly looked on, and held out his right hand to him.

"Under this roof there is truce, I suppose," said he, again smiling. The other took the hand for the fraction of a second and then said hastily, "Warren, you must have dry clothing at once."

"A suit will be found in my room," sobbed the old clergyman.

The two young men went up the stairs, and the colonel entered the

room with Stryker, explaining that he must keep guard over him.

"Everybody knows of your dashing exploits and your keeping the rebel headquarters informed of all our movements as Washington's most trusted scout, and I'll wager that you know why it is especially important not to lose you now," he added. "But how and why did you take my horse? And—ah, me—but you were warmly clad with a suit of Hessian uniform under your homespun."

The other was rapidly donning the garments of the doctor.

"Under the circumstances 'tis no use denying, Edward," he replied, "that I know who 'Captain Stafford' is. There are many tongues in the big camp that stretch from here to headquarters in Bordentown that can be made to wag with a farmer lad's applejack!"

"So you were the sutler I saw as I rode out of camp?"

"Yes, and I followed on foot to reach my boat and cross ahead of you with warning. I went so briskly that I excited some interest, I reckon. Infantry chased me, but I distanced them. I knew the dragoons would be after me next and that I must pull off my countryman's garb. The road was full of Hessians as I came near the village, and so I decided to go to your folks' barn to make the change. As I opened the door of it I saw the redcoats come riding over the hill. They saw me too. You know the rest."

"You have no chance of mercy!" said Williams coldly, his hands behind him.

At that moment a tumult was heard in the street. Both men, looking out, saw a frightened woman pursued by two Hessian soldiers run into a house. A brawny civilian immediately appeared at the door and knocked down one of the ruffians after another. Others of the townsmen rushed up, and other Hessians, but Captain Hardy sent half a dozen of his dragoons in among the gathering rioters and dispersed them.

"Behold the work of your glorious King George!" cried Stryker bitterly. "You speak of mercy. I would beg no mercy for myself, even if you had the power to grant it. But, Ned, think of her who is dear to both of us, think of her peril in the hands of these foreigners; then, and at risk of all and everything—plot, prize, honor and even life—place her out of danger. That I implore you!"

He caught Williams' hand between both of his.

"True, it should be done," said the other, and just then came the sound of another uproar farther up the street. "But how—that's the question?"

"Send her and her father up to the camp under escort of your dragoons," decided Stryker, rising.

"Good! And I can send you up with them and so save your life, but on condition—"

"What is it?"

"That you pledge yourself never to see Ann Wilson again after I secure your release."

"How can you save me?" The questioner's cheeks flushed, and he bit his lip.

"I will tell Lord Cornwallis when I ask for your liberty that you turned loyalist for sake of old friendship with me and gave me your boat in this enterprise."

"And I will tell him that you lie!"

The loyalist recoiled from the thunder of the retort. The other folded his arms as if to restrain them from violence, and, quivering with passion, he uttered these words in accents of deepest scorn:

"Give up my love and my good patriot repute for the skulking remnant of the life of a self scorning wretch?"

Ned Williams, you must have forgotten me strangely!"

While this was passing upstairs the doctor was pacing his study in deep misery, and his stricken daughter was swaying with clasped hands once more in her chair in the little parlor.

She went out to old Betty in the kitchen. "Tell Colonel Williams I want to see him," said she.

The colonel came running down the stairs. She advanced to him with a face like death.

"Save him," she moaned, lifting her clasped hands.

"And then?"

"The holly leaves are no longer green!"

With a cry of joy he clasped her to his breast. "I promise!" said he in gleeful tones. "And now there is no time to be lost, darling. I will send him and you and your father and Betty to the British camp, out of the power of this Hessian colonel, and then I will prepare for"—And he pointed across the river.

"No, no!" she cried, springing away from him. "That was not your former offer. My eyes have been opened. Horror is reigning here. Take Warren across the river with you and bid the generous Washington come with all his forces before these devils expect him, promising that even the women of Trenton will fight in the streets to aid him. Do this, and I am yours as soon as the town is saved!"

Colonel Williams, chin on breast, slowly paced the floor. Compressing his lips firmly, he paused before her and said rapidly:

"You add conditions now that would make my saving him impossible. Your nerves are overwrought. Should I do as you ask Washington would still be captured—so should I—and who would then be left to intercede for him upstairs, in that case again a captive?"

"Oh, my God, too true!" she cried, for, like all the Tories, she had been taught to believe the king's troops ultimately invincible.

"What I can and will do," he added, "is to send him to the camp a prisoner, with the request that nothing be done on his case until I return. Then I will make intercession for him as one having the right to do so."

"God bless you!" she murmured. Oh, she did not see the sly, wicked gleam in his eye nor guess that he might insist upon having the wedding before risking his intercession. Poor, harassed child!

"Call Captain Hardy!" called out the young man to old Betty, trudging past the door.

The old woman did so, and the captain entered. His colonel had but begun to give his order when the street door was thrown open again, and in it stood Rahl and his tipsy captains, grinning triumphantly, while outside "the thin red line" of dragoons the street was packed with Hessians.

"Colonel," said Rahl, advancing insolently, "here is an order from Lord Cornwallis that you turn over the spy to me for instant execution and proceed on your errand." He showed a

paper, over which Williams nodded with compressed lips, but with a new light in his eye. Ann looked from one to the other in bewilderment and fear.

Rahl approached Ann, with an ugly leer. She stood her ground and from a table drawer beside her calmly took a pistol.

She raised the weapon. The Hessian staggered back, and she lowered it.

The house began to fill with the prowling foreigners.

"Wait awhile!" threatened their commander. "And you"—to Colonel Williams—"you go at once!"

"Not until I turn over my other prisoners to Captain Hardy for safe con-

duct to the camp. This paper speaks of but one, the spy."

Ann looked still more bewildered.

"What other prisoners?" asked Rahl.

"That is no affair of yours. Hardy go upstairs to the room on your right and bring down the man you pursued today."

Presently Stryker was brought into the room.

"Here is your prisoner," said Williams solemnly to Rahl. Ann Wilson, her pistol still in hand, approached her lover, who, throwing his left arm around her, kissed her forehead, and, taking her right hand, placed it in Williams'. "Save her!" was all he said.

"So! Ha!" cried Rahl derisively. "Five minutes for you to pray, young man; so prepare!"

"Goodby, dear, dear Ann!" A tear rolled down Stryker's swarthy cheek. He turned his back lest any should witness his further emotion and slowly mounted the stair to spend to best profit the five minutes' grace accorded him for his soul's good.

"Captain Hardy, take Dr. George Wilson, Elizabeth Peters and Ann Wilson into your custody as suspected of treason, and take them to the camp in Bordentown!" cried Williams. He then whispered to Hardy the true reason for sending them.

Ann's voice was raised in useless protest. Rahl, half drunk though he was, saw that he could not interfere with that order, and, with a curse, he ordered his Hessians to bring down the spy instantly, so that "no one might miss the fun!"

"Now all's lost but glory!" muttered Williams chokingly.

Ann Wilson shrieked and fainted.

So fair a day had given place to a night of fury. Snow was whirling madly in its blackness, and its cold was intense. Trenton town was about to have a temporary respite from its reign of Hessian terror, for Rahl and his troops had marched out of it at nightfall and were making their way silently to the spot six miles up the river where the patriot chief was to be delivered into their hands.

An hour ahead of them Colonel Williams, now in Continental buff and blue, had found a ferryman awaiting him at that very spot. The boatman, muffled to the very eyes and shivering in spite of that, plied the oars vigorously as his sharp lookout for ice floes would allow, and in ten minutes they were at the other side.

"Now for it," muttered Williams. "Come with me and do not fear."

The man obediently trudged on behind. In front of a small farmhouse a hundred yards away staggered a sentry through the buffeting blast, and just beyond him stood, leaning against a flagstaff, a tall and majestic figure apparently indifferent to the roaring winter gale.

"Who goes there?" challenged the sentry.

"Captain Stafford of General Lee's command, with important news for General Washington!"

"I am General Washington. What is your news?" spoke the man of majesty, advancing.

"General Lee bids me say that with 500 men you can take Trenton now if you act promptly. He has reached the river bank by a detour and has learned that the town is held only by 2,000 drunken Hessians. He will have all his men on yonder bank in an hour. I will guide you to the spot, general."

"What do you bring from General Lee to insure my trust in this?"

"A letter." He handed Washington a paper.

The general rapidly led the way into the farmhouse. Turning around when they had entered its well lighted parlor, he smiled as he said:

"I should need no other credential

than the company you keep, captain."

Williams looked behind at his boatman and sank speechless into a chair.

* * * * *

"I got on my Hessian suit in a hurry and picked up a musket and bayonet—the house was full of them—and walked downstairs at my leisure and into the street just as the dragoons were riding away with the Wilson family. Soon there was a great hullabaloo, and as I saw the Hessians start out in all directions searching for myself I thought I had better be active, too, and I never stopped searching till I found the ferryman and tied him up in his cabin, where the Hessians would soon find him, discover the trick and go back fully convinced that you will not cross tonight."

"Ah, well done, Captain Stryker, as usual. Now we will surely cross, but not for a few hours. Have you any request to make for clemency for our prisoner?"

"None, general."

* * * * *

How the army crossed the Delaware that Christmas night and in the dawn of morning captured the town from the drunken Hessians, mortally wounding Rahl, is history. What happened to rash Colonel Williams must be plain to all who read the fate of Major Andre, and this Christmas tale is not written for those so dense as not to guess that the numerous and respected Strykers of New Jersey are proud of their relationship to General Warren Stryker and his good wife Ann.

He Was Altogether Too Suspicious For Tommy

TOMMY had just obtained his first position as office boy. His salary was not large, but his hopes were. He expected to learn the business, and the lives of great men all reminded him that he might do great things. A friend of his met him about a week after he had entered upon his new duties.

"How do you like the job?" inquired his friend.

"Oh, I dunno," said Tommy doubtfully.

"Is the work hard?"

"No, the work ain't so hard and the hours ain't so long, but, say, the measly old cuss I work for makes me tired."

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's so blamed suspicious. Why, if I git him a bill busted he'll count the change, just as if I'd take any of his measly old money."

"He does, eh?"

"Yes. And the other mornin' he went out and forgot to open the safe. You see, there's only me and him in the office. Well, as soon as he went out in came a man to get some papers there were in the safe. I knew the boss wanted him to get them, but there was the safe locked, so what could I do? And the man said he couldn't come back till the next day. When the boss came in, I told him about it, and he cussed himself for bein' out; so I says to him, 'Why don't you gimme the combination of the safe so the next time you're out I can git anything that's wanted?'"

"Say, you oughter seen him. You'd think he was goin' to jump down me throat. I thought I was goin' to lose me job, and, between you and me, I wouldn't have cared much if I did. I'm gittin' tired of workin' for such a suspicious old cuss, anyhow."—New York Press.

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of a five-eighths inch steel oil tank eighty feet in diameter, twenty-six feet high, weighing 150 tons, a quarter of a mile down a thirty degree hill to the river, placed upon five sand barges, towed a mile down the river and moved 200 feet up the steep bank. All the more marvelous is it, declares the Scientific American, when we consider that five tracks of the Pennsylvania railroad had to be crossed within forty minutes in order not to interfere with traffic and that the members of the Kress-Hanlon firm who engineered the

work were but twenty-three years of age.

This monster tank was sunk seven feet in the ground, and in order to raise it a trench four feet wide and seven feet deep was dug around it, and thirty-two holes four feet square, two feet deep and eight feet apart were then tunneled under it and wooden blocks inserted. By the aid of sixty-four five-ton jacks, two under each block, the tank was raised four feet,

when it was underpinned with twelve inch timbers, and, the necessary running timbers being securely fastened with seven-eighths inch chains, the tank was gradually moved under the steady power furnished by two horses and the necessary block and tackle, crabs and ropes.

When the railroad was reached it was thirty-eight feet above the ground. After being lowered thirty-two feet

chalk lines were stretched across the railroad tracks and the cribbing built on the opposite side of the same. After a battle with the numerous electric light and telephone wires the tank was rolled over the tracks to within ten feet of the bank of the Allegheny river. Being lowered within twenty-four feet of the water, it was moved on five sand flats sixteen feet wide and ninety feet long. These were made stationary by ratchets and steel cable three-fourths of an inch thick, which were placed from the first to the fifth flat, thus making the five flats act as one. The boats being thus made fast, the tank was slowly rolled into position. It was then carried one mile down the river and transferred to its new location.

The work only required twenty-four men six weeks to accomplish the task.

Christmas With the Bedouins



COOKING THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

MY guide's name was Mohammed, and he was a renegade. He wore the funniest of baggy breeches, which were always wabbling from side to side, a bob-tailed Turkish jacket, slippers with their heels chopped off and a red fez perched upon the top of his head, which was as bald as the end of an egg. He had a wicked smirk on his face and a malicious twinkle in his eyes, but for all that he served me faithfully and cheated me only to the extent of 20 per cent. That was his limit, self set, on all the purchases he made for me and the bills of whatever sort he contracted. If he didn't get it out of me he took it out of the Jewish merchants, who added it to the next purchase, so I made nothing by trying to buy at cut rates when Mohammed was not around.

I picked him up at the Bab el Sok, the great market place of Tangier, while haggling for a matchlock with a barrel eight feet long and a snickersnee, or hand forged knife, with blade two feet in length adorned with inlay of arabesques. I wanted them both,

By
Frederick A. Ober

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but the prices were way out of reach, so I was about to leave them there when Mohammed appeared on the scene. He had been eying me from a corner of the great wall the while, biding his time.

"You want gun, want knife?" he asked me. "Buono, I get um half price. That do?" I nodded "Yes," and get them he did with a celerity that won my regard at once, and from that moment he was my self constituted body-guard during my stay in Morocco.

He came to me one day in a state of excitement from the information that a caravan from the interior had arrived at the Sok that morning, and as the leader was a friend of his he could easily secure me a passage. I had expressed a great desire to go on a caravan journey, but had changed my mind on account of hearing that the

Bedouins of the Atlas mountains were prowling around the foothills and gathering in every stranger in sight.

"Yes, that right," admitted the truthful Mohammed, "but bandit don't touch this caravan because it protect-ed."

"Why not?" I asked. "It can't be much of a show if it isn't worth while for the robbers to 'touch' it, seems to me. Don't think I care to go."

Mohammed placed his lips close to my ear after looking around to see that there were no listeners and said, 'Robber don't want to do something to this caravan, 'cause he leader a bandit himself!'

"Oh, ho! And yet you say he is a good friend of yours?"

"Very good friend. When I get money 'nough I join he band."

Mohammed drew himself proudly erect and slapped his breast. He evidently expected applause. But he only grinned and showed his big white teeth when I remarked in a manner that was intended to be sarcastic that he seemed to be doing pretty well as a bandit within the walls.

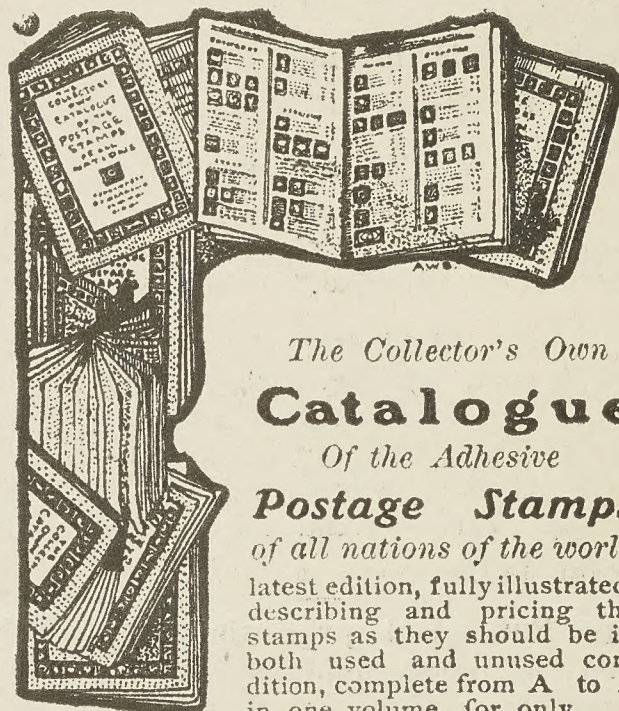
"Yes," he admitted, "plantee money,



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p'raps, but no excitement! But come see caravan man; no time to lose; start this afternoon."

The caravan man was, if possible, more rascally looking than Mohammed, but the promise of a new sort of adventure appealed to me, and we soon closed a bargain. He agreed to furnish a mule for each of us and to keep us as long as we cared to stay, sending us back to Tangier by the first escort of soldiers that should appear. As a Bedouin born and bred he at first insisted upon my riding a camel, but "once bitten twice shy" is true of that evil beast, and I refused point blank. Then he offered a donkey, but we finally compromised on the hybrid, and late that afternoon, having arranged with the United States consul to send out a search party if I did not return on time, I started on my first caravan journey in Morocco.

It was then three days to Christmas, and I had promised the consul that I would try to be back to take a bite of turkey with him, but as it turned out I was several days late and passed perforce that day of days in the Bedouin camp. But I had my Christmas dinner just the same, as I will now proceed to relate. Being in doubt as to the good intentions of my Bedouin friends, I carried a revolver of heavy caliber snuggled close to one hip, but had no occasion to use it during the journey, which covered two days out and as many back, with three days in camp.

There were some sixty of the Arabs, all men and boys, with not a woman around, which fact was in itself suspicious, as the Bedouins generally travel with their families, including babies in arms and patriarchal head of the clan. By their having divested themselves of their women and children and being stripped to nothing "more than the law allows" they proclaimed that they meant to do some rapid riding and perhaps some illegal plundering. It was none of my business, of course, as they treated me well enough, but I soon learned that they were actually engaged in a "razzia," or robber raid, among the shepherding Arabs of the foothills and that the pretense they had made of going to Fez was to throw the sultan's soldiers off their guard.

All went well, however, during the time I was with them, and when on the morning of the fourth day a detachment of our men came in from an all night raid, driving before them a flock of several hundred sheep, I said nothing, but there was no doubt as to how the rascals got those sheep. We were then encamped in a grove of cocoa palms that adorned an oasis within a small valley surrounded with high hills, upon the crests of which our sentinels were posted.

As my robber friends had taken good care to select for their "razzia" a defenseless community that could not make reprisals in short order, it was in peace and quietude that they prepared to celebrate the outcome of their raid and at the same time, as it chanced, the advent of Christmas day. This latter was not, of course, the result of intention, but it happened that the natal day of the Nazarene fell due coincidentally with the Mohammedan festival of Jebraiel, the archangel, and the pious villains "laid themselves out" for the biggest kind of festivity.

Within our "douar," or camp, composed of black and shaggy camel's hair tents there was no turkey or goose or fowl of any sort, but there were sheep galore. These the Bedouins slaughtered by dozens and brought the gory carcasses to the campfires, where they were taken in hand by the cooks and pitchforked on long poles as spits by patient Arabs, who were bent over almost double for hours at a time.

Wrapped in their "halks" and bur-nooses, with the pointed hoods hanging down their backs, they appeared like a lot of old women pottering over

the fires, but through it all they maintained an air of dignity, and if any one had questioned their capacities they would have whipped out their long knives and have carved up an argument with neatness and dispatch.

There was no table, and we were seated around the fire in a large circle—first the chief men of the tribe, including their guest, then the inferior members, and lastly several concentric circles of lean and mangy curs, which were snarling and fighting all the time over the bones we threw to them. The Bedouins' finger nails were curved and sharp as scimiters, so they had no trouble in rending the ribs of sheep apart and tearing off huge mouthfuls, which disappeared as if by magic. Besides the meat we had big dishes of "cuscussa," or "kusskuss," into which the Arabs all dipped their hands, scooping out the rice and gravy and conveying the stuff to their mouths.

Observing that I was somewhat hesitant in following their example, the old chief pawed out some of the choice bits and, before I knew what he was about, crammed them into my mouth. As this was considered the highest honor an Arab could bestow upon a guest I made a pretense of liking it, but never experienced a happier moment than when at last a slave came around with a basin of water with which to lave our hands and beards, proclaiming that the feast was over.

"Now we go see powder play!" exclaimed Mohammed as every adult Arab took up his ever present musket, with barrel of iron or brass several feet longer than himself, and mounted his fiery, untamed steed, which had stood all the while saddled and bridled close by. The powder play, or "lab-el-barada," is a superb exhibition of horsemanship to the accompaniment of a rattling musketry fire and demoniac yells from half crazed men. In reality it is a sham battle, and when the Bedouins, having galloped off to the edge of the oasis, came charging back in a whirlwind of dust and with the thunder of 200 hoofs, yelling like fiends and firing off their guns promiscuously at the sky, at the ground and in every direction around them, I certainly thought the men of the foothills had descended in a body for revenge.

I sought a tree at once. Mohammed declared I shinned up it, but he got me down before any of the Bedouins saw me, fortunately, they were so drunk with excitement.

"Allah 'l Allah; el hamadu, Pillah Allah," they shouted in grand chorus—"God, O God; praised be the God of

heaven"—but even with these pious ejaculations on their lips the mad Bedouins looked less like saints than devils let loose from the nether regions. They were black with powder smoke; their gallant steeds, among them some of Araby's best barbs of incalculable value, were flecked with foam and blood, but the "play" was kept up for an hour, during all the time of which an old Ethiopian from Timbaktu sat quietly beneath a palm and sawed away at an aboriginal violin.

At last, spent and quivering, the horses were reined up on their haunches in front of the camp, but scarcely had their masters dismounted than there was a great outcry: "They come, they come to avenge the razzia! Mount and meet them, men!" Before they had mounted, however, it was discovered that those approaching were the soldiers from Fez, by whom I was to be escorted. They were about 100 in number and had been out collecting the sultan's taxes.

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NEWS AND COMMENT.

It is gratifying to note the few changes in prices in Scott's 1905 Catalogue just issued. While hundreds of stamps, of course, have been raised or lowered, according to market fluctuations, this is nothing in comparison with the thousands of stamps which have remained unchanged. There is no influence so likely to drive collectors away from the pursuit as the idea that the price of a stamp is not permanent for a reasonable time, but may jump up two hundred per cent. tomorrow and tumble down two hundred and fifty per cent. the day after. Collectors of thinking habits grow suspicious when they contemplate the evolutions in prices which certain stamps (U. S. envelopes, for instance) go through in the course of a few years, and finally ask themselves the question whether any stamps have an intrinsic value. The older a stamp becomes, and consequently the scarcer, the more valuable it is expected to become, all else being equal. But when a stamp has not advanced in price for ten years and then suddenly jumps up one hundred to five hundred per cent., it shows one of two conspicuous facts, namely, that either the stamp is not worth the advance, or else the catalogue price in previous years has been erroneous. For stamps do not actually increase in value by such leaps and bounds. The increase, under ordinary circumstances, will be slow but steady, and the record of such increase, to be dependable, must vary accordingly. We believe the publishers of the 1905 Standard Catalogue have attempted to keep prices where they belong, without altering the value of any stamp without a cause, and to place a value on every new issue which is likely to remain permanent for a reasonable time.

When the Congress of the International Postal Union meets next April, it is probable that if no reduction is made in our postage to foreign countries, the letter weight will be increased from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ounce, and possibly both the rate will be lowered and a heavier letter allowed to go at the minimum rate.

Ten years ago a collector bought a stamp of the federal issue of Switzerland for about twenty-five dollars and this stamp is to-day worth one-hundred dollars more than he paid for it.

Before the next issue of the REALM is out, it is expected that the 1905 edition of the Collector's Own Catalogue, popularly known as the "Ten Cent Catalogue," will be ready for distribution. Many collectors who ordered the 1904 catalogue have already sent in their order for the 1905 book, and almost all the large dealers who handled the 1904 catalogue have ordered a larger supply of the forthcoming edition. It will be on sale by all the representative dealers in philatelic supplies and stationers handling stamps.

The end of the year is a good time in which to take a retrospective view of philately, and note the changes which have taken place in the period of twelve months. We fail to find the names of many an old-time dealer in glancing through the advertising columns of our favorite magazine, although most of the large concerns continue to advertise and do a large business. The small dealers, while still numbering many hundreds, are not as numerous as they used to be, and as a rule do not continue in business as long as formerly. What is the reason of this? Is it possible that the interest in stamp collecting is dying out and that there is not business enough for all? Not so, in the least, but, on the contrary, there never was a larger field for the enterprising dealer to work in. The fact is, the large dealer, who once cared only for the adult trade, has come to realize that the business formerly left with the smaller dealers, namely, the "boy trade," has grown to be an important branch of the business which he cannot afford to lose. As a result, the large dealer, with capital, is spending thousands of dollars on advertising, and as much more on stamps suitable for beginners, and is making a stronger bid for this particular class of trade than ever before. Unless the smaller firms wake up and adopt the methods of the larger houses, or methods equally as good, they cannot exist long. A visit to the mailing department of thirty or more of our large houses will convince one of the enormous proportions of the mail trade.

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1851 1c blue..... 12 1895, 50c orange 6
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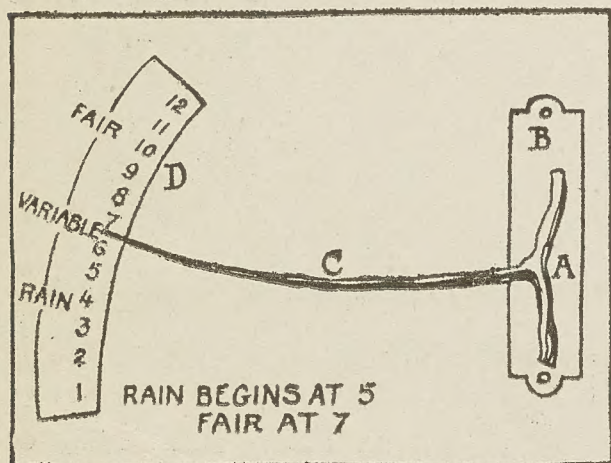
THE YOUTH'S REALM SCIENTIFIC CLUB

What Is Going on In the World of Science & Invention

A Novel Weather Prophet Which Any One Can Make.

The little instrument in this cut is the work of M. Lavier of Raon-l'Etape, France, and has been named by him the mountain barometer. The apparatus is composed of a fine branch of pine (A) fixed on a board (B) and a little branch (C). This branch curves more or less under the influence of the hygrometric variations of the air, describing the graduation traced at its extremity. A little curvilinear triangle (D) placed on the tablet which supports the arrangement prevents displacements which might cause the branch to deviate from its line of displacement or even break.

The apparatus should be placed in a room where the temperature is not subject to artificial variations of any extent. Fair weather should be commenced at No. 7 and rain, in a contrary sense, at No. 5 of the graduation.



PINE BRANCH FORETELLS THE WEATHER.

If it is seen that the data obtained from the apparatus do not agree with those of ordinary barometers it is merely necessary to curve or straighten the branch in such a way as to place it at the point indicated by the ordinary barometer.

In reality this barometer is a hygrometer, which is included in the number of those little instruments in which varied movements are obtained by means of dilation or contraction under the action of humidity and dryness. The instrument, however, is to be commended for the ease of its manufacture and for its decorative aspect.

Telegraphing In Japanese.

The Japanese, like the Chinese, have no alphabet in the ordinary sense, every word in their written language being represented by a separate character, says Cassier's Magazine. In telegraphing in these languages, therefore, about 10,000 words are selected, and figures ranging from 1 up to 9,999 are allotted to each word. Each word of a message to be transmitted by telegraph in these languages is then first given its proper number by the telegraph clerk by means of a dictionary which has been prepared under the authority of the government. These numbers are then transmitted by the Morse alphabet, and, when received, the message is translated back into the Chinese or Japanese characters by reference to a corresponding dictionary.

Stationary Bicycle Races.

Bicycle races without leaving the starting place, which are said to be the latest craze in places of amusement in Paris, are described in Popular Mechanics. The wheel is fixed in a frame fastened to the floor. When the rider begins to pedal a belt from the rear wheel drives a small electric generator.

The current thus produced is conducted to a motor on wheels and carrying a flag. The track on which the motor travels is marked in distances, and each foot of track requires as much work by the rider as would have carried the bicycle one mile had it been free to run as under ordinary conditions of use.

Dynamo Run by a Windmill.

At Aikoo, in Denmark, a dynamo has been connected to a wind motor and 450 incandescent lamps run very effectively. Difficulties as to the steadiness of such power have been overcome by an ingenious American farmer in Kansas, who has installed a water motor or turbine, run from the tank of his large windmill and connected to a dynamo, thus obtaining lights for his residence and buildings. Wind motors and dynamos were carried on a recent Polar expedition for the same purpose.

Locomotive Tender Which Railroad Experts View With Favor.

Young Cornelius Vanderbilt, whose locomotive firebox is now being adopted by many of the railroads of the country, has, according to the New York World, also invented and patented a new type of locomotive tender.

It looks entirely different from the ordinary locomotive tender. The water tank is not rectangular, but cylindrical. It is built of steel one-quarter of an inch thick and is eight feet in diameter and twenty-three feet long. It is supported on a narrow frame. Under the middle of the tank there is a plate steel saddle, which supports the rear end of the coal hopper, which composes the forward half of the tender.

The coal hopper is of the ordinary rectangular form, but has a sloping bottom so arranged as to drop fuel down to the foot plate. The wheels are of cast iron, with steel tires. The tender, light, weighs 47,000 pounds. When fully loaded the weight is 68 tons, or 136,000 pounds. The Vanderbilt tender will carry 14 tons of coal and 7,000 gallons of water.

The railroad experts say the Vanderbilt tender of cylindrical form is the strongest that can be devised. Its transverse strength is so great that, although twenty-six feet long, it will carry its load of twenty-nine tons of water without any center support. Consequently the under frame can be made lighter. The net saving in weight is about seven and a half tons. Another advantage is the coal carried next to the engine.

Car Sickness.

La Revue, a French scientific journal, declares that "mal de terre," or land sickness, is as real a malady as the "mal de mer." It designates a pathological condition of modern life, principally brought about by traveling in Pullman cars and by other methods of transportation, which causes an automatic movement of the muscles and a difficulty in preserving the equilibrium of the heavy organs. This sickness generally induces sleep, but a sleep which does not refresh. Very often this is caused by a sort of vertigo from looking at trees or telegraph poles along the route of a fast train. This condition is often made worse by reading.

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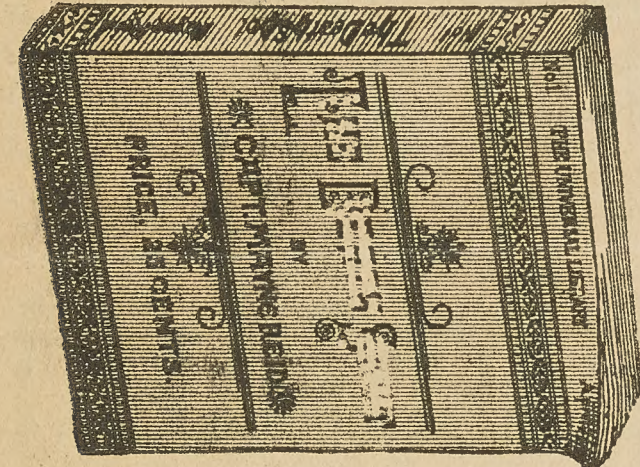
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1c green 2
 2c rose 3
 5c blue 4
 10c orange 5

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10c red 6
 20c blue 8
 25c chocolate 10

Wrappers; blue paper:

1c brown 5
 2c blue 5
 10c red 5



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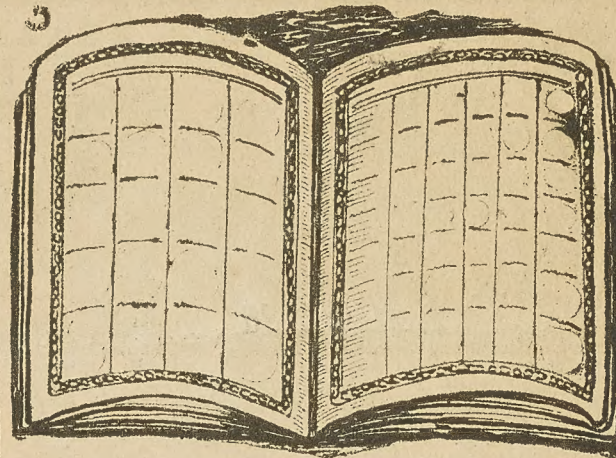
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